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FOR NEA/PAB

E.O. 12065: GDS 4/8/88 (HIRSCH, JOHN) OR-P
TAGS: SHUM PK
SUBJECT: LETTER FROM CONGRESSMAN BONKER ON HUMAN RIGHTS

REFS: A) STATE 100012; B) ISLAMABAD 2591;
C) ISLAMABAD 5373

1. (C) ENTIRE TEXT.
2. BELOW ARE OUR COMMENTS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION IN REPLYING TO CONGRESSMAN DON BONKER'S APRIL 2 LETTER TO THE SECRETARY IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN PAKISTAN (REFTEL A).
3. WE DO NOT AGREE WITH THE CONGRESSMAN'S BLANKET STATEMENT THAT SINCE THE CONCLUSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE PACKAGE THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN PAKISTAN HAS GONE FROM BAD TO WORSE. AS YOU KNOW, IN OUR EVALUATION OF THE JANUARY, 1982 AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN PAKISTAN (REFTEL B), WE TOOK EXCEPTION WITH THE AMNESTY FINDING THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION DETERIORATED THROUGHOUT 1981. WE CONCLUDED INSTEAD THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN 1981 VARIED IN RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC POLITICAL AND SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS. HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES PEAKED IN MARCH, 1981 IN THE WAKE OF THE FORMATION OF THE MRD AND THE PIA HIJACKING, BUT THE SITUATION GRADUALLY IMPROVED THROUGH THE REMAINDER OF THE YEAR AND INTO JANUARY, 1982 WITH THE FORMATION OF THE FEDERAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (FAC) AND THE LIFTING OF PRECENSORSHIP.
4. IN OUR VIEW, THE 1982 ANTI-CRIME CRACKDOWN REPRESENTS ANOTHER DOWNTURN IN RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN RESPONSE TO POLITICAL AND SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS, BUT AGAIN NOT IN THE STARK TERMS ASSERTED BY CONGRESSMAN BONKER. IN OUR WRAPUP ON THE CRACKDOWN, (REFTEL C) WE CONCLUDED THAT IT REPRESENTS AN ATTEMPT BY THE GOP TO BE RESPONSIVE TO LAW AND ORDER CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY DELEGATES AT THE FIRST SESSION OF THE FAC. THE MURDER OF FORMER NWFP GOVERNOR ARBAB SIKANDER FURTHER ADDED TO PUBLIC CONCERN ABOUT THE LAW AND ORDER SITUATION. WE ALSO NOTED THAT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN A POLITICAL MOTIVE FOR ASPECTS OF THE CRACKDOWN. WE POINTED TO THE FACT THAT AS MANY AS ONE QUARTER OF THE 4,500 DETAINEES IN SIND PROVINCE WERE AFFILIATED WITH POLITICAL PARTIES. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT

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file: Cong. Bonker
HIFAC

State Dept. review completed

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AGREE WITH MAULANA NOORANI'S CONTENTION THAT 99 PERCENT OF THOSE ARRESTED NATIONWIDE WERE POLITICAL TYPES. POLITICAL ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN BANNED SINCE OCTOBER, 1979 UNDER MARTIAL LAW REGULATION 33. THE MAXIMUM SENTENCE FOR VIOLATORS OF MLR 33 IS SEVEN YEARS AND 20 LASHES, NOT INDEFINITE IMPRISONMENT.

5. YOU MAY WANT TO CALL TO CONGRESSMAN BONKER'S ATTENTION THAT THE AMBASSADOR HAS MADE A POINT TO HIGHLIGHT OUR CONCERN ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN PAKISTAN BOTH IN DISCUSSIONS WITH GOP OFFICIALS AND IN SEVERAL PUBLIC ADDRESSES.

6. YOU MAY ALSO WANT TO CLARIFY THE FACTS REGARDING THE FIVE INDIVIDUALS MENTIONED IN THE THIRD PARAGRAPH OF THE CONGRESSMAN'S LETTER. THEY WERE NOT ARRESTED AS PART OF THE CRACKDOWN. GHULAM AHMAD BILORE, SYG OF THE NDP WAS ARRESTED ALONG WITH WALI AND BEGUM KHAN IN A MARCH 14 DEMONSTRATION IN PESHAWAR PROTESTING THE MURDER OF FORMER NWFP GOVERNOR ARBAB SIKANDER. ALL THREE WERE RELEASED WITHIN 72 HOURS. FATEHYAB ALI KHAN AND MAIRAJ MOHAMMAD KHAN WERE PICKED UP ON A PREVENTIVE DETENTION ORDER ON MARCH 22 BECAUSE THEY WERE ORGANIZING A RALLY TO BE HELD AT THE QUAID-I-AZAM'S TOMB IN KARACHI ON PAK NATIONAL DAY (MARCH 23). THEY TOO WERE RELEASED AFTER 72 HOURS. EDITOR OF THE PRO-PPP WEEKLY "AL FATAH" IRSHAD RAO AND HIS ASSISTANT WAHID BASHIR WERE ARRESTED IN JANUARY, 1981 AND SENTENCED IN MARCH 1982 BY A SPECIAL MILITARY COURT TO ONE YEAR IMPRISONMENT AND TEN LASHES FOR PRINTING OBJECTIONABLE LITERATURE.

SPIERS

END OF MESSAGE

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